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PERSPECTIVES ON TERRORISM

Chalmers/Johnson
University of California, Berkeley

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On March 25-26, 1976, the Department of State sponsored a
conference of some 200 American and foreign specialists on the
problems of terrorism. The intent of the conference was to pose
and display the numerous controversies that exist in this field,
not to resolve such differences or to formulate new policy. Thus,
this report on the work of the conference does not attempt to assert
a preferred definition of terrorism, a correct breakdown of the
types of terrorism, a consensus on the causes of terrorism, or an
indicated set of remedies for the elimination of terrorism. Instead,
it seeks to promote analytical sophistication and control by contrast-
ing the arguments on the various sides of these issues. No better
illustration of the need for such an exercise in conceptual clari-
fication can be found than in the New York Times report of March 27
on the conference itself. Written by David Binder, this article
asserts that the United States is planning to relax its policy of
refusing to accede to any demands for money or/other concessions
by terrorists holding hostages. Not only was this position not
adopted by either the Department of State or the conference, only
a distinct minority of speakers at the conference even touched on
it. The press thus once again offered an example of the difference
between "news" and "facts"--and thereby helped to illustrate a
subject that was hotly debated at the conference: the unintended
consequences of publicity in furthering and exacerbating terrorist
incidents.

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DEFINITIONS

It might seem lame, even academic, to begin with so mundane a concern as definitions, but to think so overlooks the important fact that the U.S. Draft Convention on Terrorism of 1972 failed in the United Nations largely because of definitional questions. "It appears," writes one authority and member of the conference, "that the failure to obtain approval of the instrument at the United Nations was due in part to an unnecessary confusion among states as to what the 1972 U.S. Draft Convention sought to control and, more importantly, what it did not prohibit." (Jordan J. Paust, "A Survey of Possible Legal Responses to International Terrorism: Prevention, Punishment, and Cooperative Action," Georgia Journal of International and Comparative Law, vol. 5 [1975], p. 432.) We shall return to this problem. First, a few formal definitions.

Terrorism is political, goal-oriented action, involving the use or threat of extraordinary violence, performed for psychological rather than material effect, and the victims of which are symbolic rather than instrumental. Here is a perfectly adequate definition, one that was offered to the conference by a speaker. But it raises questions. Does this definition exclude assassinations of political leaders performed for material and only incidentally for psychological effect? Does an attempt to outlaw terrorism, in short, also outlaw tyrannicide?

Let us try another definition. "Terrorism," writes Paust, "involves the intentional use of violence or the threat of violence by the precipitator(s) against an instrumental target in order to communicate to a primary target a threat of future violence. The

object is to use intense fear or anxiety to coerce the primary target into behavior or to mold its attitudes in connection with a demanded power (political) outcome. It should be noted that in a specific context the instrumental and primary targets could well be the same person or group. Also, terror can be caused by an unintended act, but the community does not seek to perceive such activity as 'terrorism;' nor does it seek to regulate terror caused by conduct which does not include intense coercion or acts and threats of violence. It is often difficult to draw the parameters of the subjectivities and intensities of coercion. The crucial factor is that the task of deciding between the permissible and impermissible labels of a particular coercive process should be guided by community expectations and all relevant policies and features of context" (pp. 434-5).

This seems to say that terrorism is terrorism when some (but which?) people think that it is terrorism. Or, as one conference member quoted Raymond Aron, "An action of violence is labelled 'terrorist' when its psychological effects are out of proportion to its purely physical result" (Peace and War, London, 1966, p. 170). One conference participant declared the whole problem to be tautological: "Intrinsically, terrorism is a state of mind. Political terrorism, presumably, is the state of mind of political actors who are paralyzed by the threat of unpredictable attack. No one has ever attempted to document systematically the existence of such a state of mind in besieged officials or activists, few of whom would admit to it in any case. So by default the concept has come to be employed to characterize the kinds of actions which are

assumed to induce 'terrorism.' The definitional problem of cir-
cularity is obvious."

Rather than reciting more—and there are many more—formal
definitions, let us turn to some of Aron's "purely physical results.'
The fact that terrorism is not easily isolable from wars, accidents,
disasters, and so forth, and that its definition depends in part on
the subjective intent of the actor and on the perceptions of his
audience, obviously complicates any attempt to count and to measure
the changing incidence of terrorist acts. Several sophisticated
statistical analyses were nonetheless offered to the conference.

One of these counted terrorist incidents for the 1961-70 decade
in 87 countries, based on reports in the New York Times. The opera-
tional definition of terrorist incidents used in this study exclu-
ded "assumptions about what effects the users hope to accomplish
by their actions, or about how their would-be victims react" and
was made up of three elements. These are: the employment of de-
structive violence, its use against political targets, and the
sporadic and clandestine nature of the acts. The latter element
was felt to be necessary to exclude terrorism, planned or unplanned,
which is intrinsic or incidental to "an ongoing movement of armed
revolution." Thus, in this particular study, terrorist acts
occurring during the final stages of the Algerian conflict or
during the Vietnam war were not counted. Given this research
design, the author concluded that during the decade of the sixties
terrorist events occurred in 63 of the 87 countries at a cost of
approximately 4,600 lives. The author stated during the confer-
ence that, in his opinion, this loss of life was relatively minor

compared to the three quarters of a million people who lost their lives in all forms of civil strife during the 1960s or in light of the city of Chicago's murder rate of nearly one thousand per annum. The mention of these comparisons, however, returned the debate at once to the psychological dimensions of the definitional problem, since it was pointed out repeatedly that the general population's ability to predict the probabilities of involvement in civil strife, murder, or even accidental death is much more accurate than with regard to terrorist incidents. The varying rates of different forms of violence are therefore politically incommensurable.

Another statistical study took up "international and transnational terrorist incidents" that occurred between January 1, 1968, and December 31, 1975. It found that there were 913 such incidents, including 123 kidnappings, 31 barricade and hostage episodes, 375 cases of the use of explosive devices, 95 armed assaults or ambushes 137 hijackings of aircraft and other means of transportation, 59 incendiary attacks or cases of arson, 48 assassinations, and 45 cases of other forms of violence. According to comments offered to the conference, some 800 people have been killed and 1,700 injured in international terrorist incidents since 1968.

The most important finding of this study was that a rapid rise in the number of terrorist incidents has been taking place. Between 1965 and late 1968 the number of cases remained below 50 per year. The rate jumped to well over 100 during 1969-70, fell back to around 75 during 1971, ascended steeply to over 200 during 1973, and then declined slightly to around 175 per annum by the end of 1975. The conference was in general agreement that terrorist inci-

dents, according to the most elementary definition, have increased at a very rapid rate since 1968 and that the problem remains acute.

Despite their differences in time frame and in methodology, these two statistical studies agreed vaguely on one point and closely on another. The loose agreement was on geographical distribution of terrorist incidents: they occur most commonly in Western and NATO Europe, followed closely by Latin America and more distantly by North America. In other words, terrorism is most common in democratic nations, least common in authoritarian regimes, and intermediate in frequency in "mixed regimes" (meaning, roughly, the underdeveloped nations, or the Third World, or the nations with poorly institutionalized political systems). Terrorism is, however, more lethal in mixed regimes (i.e., there are more killed casualties), least lethal in autocratic regimes, and intermediately lethal in democratic regimes.

The point on which these studies are in strong agreement is that terrorism is a low-risk activity for terrorists. The analysis of data from the 1960s revealed that terrorists were themselves casualties in only 14 per cent of all cases--a much lower figure than in two alternative forms of violent political activity, rioting and guerrilla warfare, where rioters and guerrillas characteristically sustain more casualties than security forces or noncombatants. Nonetheless, this study concluded that "one cannot identify even one unambiguous instance in the last 15 years of a campaign of political terrorism which led directly or indirectly to revolutionary change of the kind championed by the left." The analysis of the 1965-75 period does not disaggregate data on the question

of terrorist risk but concludes, "Briefly put, the record shows that transnational terrorists have generally been rather successful in avoiding capture (or, if caught, in escaping punishment) and in meeting at least some of their proximate objectives." Despite direct disagreement on the significance of the data, these two statistical studies of recent terrorism lead to a definition of terrorism close to that of Aron's quoted earlier: "The achievement of disproportionately large effects from the employment of minimal resources is . . . what political terrorism is all about."

The intrinsic limitations of statistical studies--what to count?--lead us back to the main definitional problem in the analysis of terrorism: the subjective intent of the terrorists and the psychological effect of their actions on governments, the public, or some other audience. It was phrased at the conference in these terms: "one man's terrorist is another man's freedom-fighter." Although attempts to separate means from ends and disputes about political justifications for otherwise unjustifiable deeds is as old as rebellion itself, it should be remembered that these were the issues that caused the defeat of the Draft Convention on Terrorism of 1972. There are ways of resolving the problem short of conceding that, indeed, one man's terrorist is another's freedom fighter, but first it is well to note the political potency of such rhetoric.

One conference participant took pains to show that the contemporary wave of political terrorism began in 1944 with the onset of Jewish terrorism against the British in Palestine. He reviewed the activities of the Irgun Zvai Leumi and the Stern Gang, in-

cluding the murder of Lord Moyne on November 6, 1944, the murder
of Count Bernadotte on September 17, 1948, the blowing up of the
King David Hotel in Jerusalem on July 22, 1946, and the hanging
of two British army sergeants whose bodies were found at the end
of July, 1947. He concluded that this terrorist campaign success-
fully contributed to the British decision of December 11, 1947, to
give up the Palestine Mandate. "Today," he added, "when Palestinian
Arab terrorism has become a major problem, the relevance of Zionist
terrorism 30 years ago is inescapable." Here, starkly posed for
Americans who support the democratic government and accomplishments
of Israel, is the problem of the justification of terrorism.

Regardless of past instances of terrorism and their outcomes,
the conference held generally that an international law convention
outlawing terrorism was desirable and could obtain ratification if
properly drafted. It was pointed out, for example, that both the
customary law of war and its practice have already prohibited any
form of violence against noncombatants, and that the intentional
use of a strategy which produces terror that is not incidental to
lawful combat operations has been condemned by both international
and domestic war crimes tribunals.

Although the legal specialists attending the conference recom-
mended a new international law convention on terrorism, there was
some confusion about the status of the international law that
already exists. In 1970, the United Nations General Assembly
enacted its Declaration of Principles of International Law Con-
cerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation Among States in Accord-
ance with the Charter of the United Nations. This document states,

on the one hand, that "Every state has the duty to refrain from organizing, instigating, or participating in acts of civil strife or terrorist acts in another state or acquiescing in organized activities within its territory directed toward the commission of such acts," while, on the other hand, it obligates states to assist peoples struggling for the realization of their "right to self-determination and freedom and independence." In light of these ambiguities and the poor track record of nations in ratifying or conforming to international conventions, the conference participants were only mildly interested in general international law attempts to resolve the freedom-fighter vs. terrorist dispute. It was noted that there are already on the books the 1963 Tokyo Convention on Offenses and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft, the 1970 Hague Convention for the Suppression of the Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, the 1973 Montreal Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation, the 1973 U.N. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Diplomats (only nine ratifications to date and not in force), and the 1971 OAS Convention to Prevent and Punish Acts of Terrorism Taking the Form of Crimes Against Persons and Related Extortion that are of International Significance.

Turning directly to the question of whether a terrorist could ever also be a freedom-fighter, most conference participants thought, 'No, he could not.' A majority of the discussants held that an end that requires unjust means is not a just end and that terrorism cannot contribute to a just end if terrorization is the intent of the actor. One participant sought to sustain this line of argument

by distinguishing terror and terrorism. Terror often accompanies the high-intensity violence of international or revolutionary war, but it is uncontrolled and epiphenomenal. "Terrorism on the other hand is a deliberate policy of waging terror for political ends: it is the systematic and calculated use of terrorization and is explicitly rationalized and justified by some philosophy, theory, or ideology, however crude."

When terrorism is defined in this way, it can be distinguished from freedom-fighting. One certain mark of terrorism in this sense is the use of terror by members of the ideological group against each other to maintain secrecy, obedience, and loyalty (compare the Japanese Red Army's 1972 lynchings of its own members). Thus, the above participant continued:

Let us strip away the masks of terrorist illusions and expose the deathhead of murder beneath. Terrorists are fond of using romantic euphemisms for their murderous crimes. They claim to be revolutionary heroes yet they commit cowardly acts and lack the heroic qualities of humanity and magnanimity. They profess to be revolutionary soldiers yet they attack only by stealth, murder and maim the innocent, and disdain all rules and conventions of war. They claim to bring Liberation when in reality they seek power for themselves. Some claim that their violence ennobles them: history shows that it is totally corrupting and ultimately is turned against the revolutionary society itself. They frequently profess that they administer 'revolutionary justice:' in truth they make war on all ethics and legality and substitute the whim of their own tyranny.

Not all participants in the conference agreed with this view. Concurring that the special subjective mentality of terrorists is their defining characteristic, one commentator nonetheless maintained that terrorism itself is only a tactic of the "hate collectives" that remain a constant factor in twentieth century history. The "hate collectives" are fundamental; terrorism is only one manifestation of them. "Their tactics are dictated by technology and mass response, or lack of response. If a 1930s-type world depression recurred, we might see 'Carlos,' alias Ilich Ramirez of the Great OPEC Snatch, shift to electoral politics and win votes just as Hitler did with phenomenal success from 1928-32."

Perhaps this is as far as we can go with definitions. Terrorism is, like criminality, a matter of behavior and intent. It is doubtful that where both the behavior and the intent to terrorize are present any lasting political benefit can result. Beyond that, more light can be shed on the problem by turning to the types, causes and consequences of terrorism.

TYPOLOGIES

Typologies, like taxonomies, are intended to display differences within a class of phenomena, differences that may be intrinsic to the class and which therefore tell us something about the dynamics of development of the class, or differences that may have been obscured by the crude grouping into one category of superficially similar but, in fact, utterly different phenomena. Typologizing is related to analysis in the chemical sense: the division of a substance into its constituent parts and the attempt to reveal the relationship that they have with each other. One practical benefit

of typologies of terrorism is that they may help tailor counter-
measures to particular types and thereby make them more effective
(for example, capital punishment may be recommended for some terror-
ists and not for others, since in some cases capital punishment
seems to attract suicidally inclined individuals).

Typologies are based upon observation of differences and
upon the attempt to discover the principles causing the differ-
entiation. Thus, one of the simplest, observation-based typologies
of terrorist movements distinguishes four species in the genus
terrorism: ethnic (including religious, linguistic, regional,
or other particularistic movements), nationalistic (irredentist
or anti-colonial), ideological (including anarchist, radical leftist,
orthodox communist, extreme rightist, and others), and pathological
(including groups that attack public targets for apparently private,
biographical reasons: for example, the Manson gang). What are the
principles that inform this typology? Several conference partici-
pants offered suggestions. One saw two differentiating principles
at work. First, movements differ according to their "legitimacy
potential," meaning that a terrorist organization may be formed
of a minority that is never likely to attract significant popular
support, or it may be formed of a minority that has the potential
of becoming a mass movement. Second, terrorist organizations differ
by their principal audiences and by the reactions that they aim to
create through terrorist deeds. It may be true that the victims of
terrorism are only symbolic, but it is necessary to ask, symbolic
of what? An elite? A race? A government? A class?

Do terrorist groups ever have a "legitimacy potential?" The

answer seems to vary according to the degree to which a terrorist group is committed or drawn exclusively to the tactic of terrorism, and according to the degree to which a terrorist group is only part of or an offshoot of a larger movement of authentic revolution. Those groups explicitly committed to acts of terrorism are likely to degenerate into criminal gangs, as has happened often in the past. In the case of terrorist organizations that are part of a wider politico-military scheme of revolution, several conference participants drew attention to the use of terrorism as an aspect of revolutionary strategy in Algeria, Indochina, Latin America, and elsewhere. In these cases the resort to terrorism is not necessarily evidence of a low legitimacy potential. Terrorism may be pursued in the hope of producing a damaging overreaction by the defending side or as a means of purging and hardening the ideologically defined "people" in preparation for revolutionary war. One panelist suggested that revolutionary war strategies today plan for four broad phases: the creation of a clandestine subversive apparatus; terrorism, whether rural or urban; guerrilla or mobile warfare; and the "revolutionary final offensive."

One use of typologies is to help explain what a movement is by isolating what it is not. Thus, one conference participant offered a four-fold typology of all forms of terrorism, his intent being to identify the form that was of immediate concern. First, there is incidental terrorism, a byproduct of all forms of war. In these cases the intent to terrorize is allegedly not present, and such terrorism is uncontrolled. Second is repressive terrorism by a state against its own people. Such terrorism is intended to quell

opposition, and it is normally not internationalized by its perpetrators, although it may be in instances of imperialist conquest. Third is subrevolutionary terrorism, which refers to small, uncoordinated acts of protest with no strategic significance. And fourth and of primary concern to the conference is revolutionary terrorism, meaning coordinated activity by terrorist brotherhoods (sometimes including sisters, despite the rigidities of the English language) intended to bring about basic political and social change. A subtypology was offered in terms of the target regimes of revolutionary terrorism: terrorism against an indigenous autocracy, against foreign rule, against totalitarianism, and against liberal democracy. Only the last was said at present to be the target of transnational terrorism.

It should be apparent that there are almost as many typologies of terrorism as there are analysts and that there is little agreement on the principles that should inform either the construction of a typology or the assignment of a particular instance of terrorism to one or another category. Given this situation (which is a sign as much of the complexity of the subject as of human idiosyncracy), it seems most profitable to settle here for the classic typology used in the study of all movements of rebellion and revolution--one formed according to the diversity of motivation or ideology displayed by terrorist groups. Using this standard, one participant presented a six-fold typology of terrorist groups:

1. Minority Nationalist Groups (for example, both wings of the IRA, the Basque ETA, the Palestinian Al Fatah, the Quebec FLQ).

2. Marxist Revolutionary Groups (for example, Trotskyist, Maoist, and Guevarist groups such as the Venceremos Brigade or the Tupamaros).

3. Anarchist Groups (for example, the MIL in Spain).

4. The "Syndicalism of Immaturity" (for example, Weathermen, Baader-Meinhof gang, and Symbionese Liberation Army).

5. Neo-Fascist and Extreme Right-wing Groups (for example, the Avanguardia Nazionale and Ordine Nuovo in Italy).

6. Ideological Mercenaries (for example, the Japanese Red Army, or the Black September).

By far the most important typological distinction discussed by the conference concerned "international terrorism," which was defined as terrorism that "transcends national boundaries, through the choice of a foreign victim or target, commission of the terrorist act in a foreign country, or effort to influence the policies of a foreign government. The international terrorist strikes abroad, or at a diplomat or other foreigner at home, because he believes he can thereby exert the greatest possible pressure on his own or another government or on world opinion." This category of terrorism has been rising in frequency at a dramatic rate, cannot be controlled by relying on domestic security forces and criminal processes, and is occurring in part because of support from foreign governments. Examples include the hijacking and destruction in the Middle East of three transatlantic airliners on September 6, 1970, by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; the attacks on Lod Airport and the Munich Olympics; kidnappings and murders of U.S. and other diplomats in Brazil,

Argentina, Guatemala, and elsewhere; terrorist abductions and hostage cases in Port-au-Prince, Khartoum, Guadalajara, Cordoba, Santo Domingo, Kuala Lumpur, Beirut, and other places; the April 1975 seizure of the German Embassy in Stockholm by the Baader-Meinhof gang; and most recently the Vienna OPEC, South Moluccan, Balcombe Street, and Herrema cases.

Within this general category of terrorist incidents, a further distinction can be made in terms of who is calling the shots. For some conference participants, the term "international terrorism" was reserved for terrorist actions that are carried out by individuals or groups controlled by a sovereign state, including one-time "contract jobs" undertaken on behalf of governments by a group that normally operates independently. The term "transnational terrorism" was reserved for terrorist actions undertaken by autonomous non-state groups, whether or not they enjoy some degree of support from sympathetic states. Although the conference was deeply concerned about international terrorism in this restricted sense, including the possibility of an increase in "surrogate warfare" between states that literally employ loose brotherhoods of free-lance terrorists to commit acts against other nations, it was generally believed that this category of terrorism is controllable. Nonetheless, the maintenance of "subversive centers" for the training and operational support of transnational terrorists was seen as a major cause of the increase in their activities. It was, therefore, the category and various ramifications of transnational terrorism--which threatens innocent people who are in no way parties to whatever dispute or grievance motivates the terror-

ists, and which is carried out by groups that are beyond or free of the control of sovereign governments--that was of primary concern to the conference. Having isolated this category, it is necessary next to turn to an analysis of its causes--and to the controversial subject of the causes of terrorism in general.

CAUSES

The conference was in general agreement that the causes of terrorism must be divided into two general classes--direct causes and permissive causes--although there was some disagreement about the nature or importance of direct causes. Direct causes refer to grievances or frustrations, such as neocolonialism, ethnic dependence, or other alleged victimization of a group of people, that may lead activists to resort to political violence. Permissive causes are those factors that make terrorism possible, even easy, and that therefore recommend it as a tactic for extremists. All of the conference participants were agreed that this distinction should not be made too rigidly, since lack of alternatives to terrorism could be understood as either a direct or an enabling cause. Similarly, the availability of publicity through news media was seen as a permissive cause in most cases, but it was also recognized that publicity leads to a contagion or imitation effect, which can in turn become a direct cause of subsequent acts of terrorism. Thus, the direct and permissive causes may differ between a single terrorist act and a cycle or epidemic of terrorism.

Most conference participants believed that the direct causes of terrorism had remained relatively constant in recent times and that the rise in transnational terrorist incidents was due almost

entirely to changes in the permissive causes. Before turning to the latter subject, however, let us dwell somewhat longer on direct causes. Many members of the conference doubted that the direct causes of terrorism could be discovered in political or socioeconomic conditions. They were skeptical of the argument that the way to stop terrorism was to "remove its causes," particularly when in concrete cases the causes seemed more psychological or pathological than sociopolitical. It was noted, for example, that in the Lod Airport massacre of May 1972, the terrorists were Japanese, recruited and trained through agents in North Korea, supported by funds from West Germany, given final training in Syria and Lebanon, armed in Italy, and sent to a destination unknown to them in advance by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The sole surviving terrorist, Kozo Okamoto, has testified that he became involved primarily because of the influence of his elder brother, and he has shown signs of severe mental disorientation in captivity. In this case the "direct" causes of the incident seem unlikely to have been removed even if the Arab-Israeli conflict were somehow resolved. One conference participant observed that West Germany alone has over ninety terrorists in prison, and he urged that serious research be undertaken on these individuals to produce a more adequate profile or syndrome of their motives. (Certainly, the suicidal component in terrorists' motivations was highlighted by the recent suicide of Ulrike Meinhof.)

The disagreement about direct causes was not settled at the conference. Some participants maintained that the direct causes of terrorism were to be found in the major social movements of

the postwar era, particularly decolonization, and one individual
argued that a decline in terrorism could be expected because de-
colonization was virtually complete. It was also said in this
connection that the shock value of terrorism had been attenuated
through overuse and that this too was conducive to a decline in
terrorism. Some participants speculated that terrorism might be
directly related to cyclical fluctuations in the overall economic
climate--economic upturns allegedly promote terrorism by heightening
expectations, while economic downturns may dampen revolutionary
ardor through the numbing effects of general adversity--and one
contributor thought that extra-cyclical worldwide economic strains,
such as the quadrupling of oil prices, might have something to do
with the rise in terrorism by overtaxing the capabilities of local
regimes to govern effectively. Another participant ventured that
the increasing bureaucratization of the world was a direct cause;
terrorism was thought to relate to bureaucracy as tyrannicide does
to tyranny. Still another participant returned to the theme of
the lack of alternatives: "Revolutionaries in Western countries
have adopted terroristic tactics because they are revolutionaries
in societies where the great majority of the population finds the
status quo tolerable. In the poorer and weaker nations of the
Third World, discontent is sufficiently widespread that revolu-
tionaries have much more promising material with which to work
than high explosives."

Despite these conjectures about direct causes, the predominant
concern of the conference was with permissive causes. These were
phrased by many spokesmen in terms such as "resentment, means,

publicity, and low-risk" or "feasibility, efficacy, and popularity,"
but the most persuasive disaggregation of permissive causes was,
to this writer, the "three T's:" targets, technology, and tolera-
tion. Transnational terrorism has been on the increase over the
past eight years because of the availability of new targets, new
technology, and new toleration. Let us briefly analyze each of
these categories.

By new targets we mean vulnerabilities or bottlenecks in
advanced, open, industrial societies that make suitable targets
for terrorist attack. These include large aircraft, supertankers,
international power grids and pipelines, transportation hubs,
commercial and communications centers, motorcades, off-shore oil
rigs, liquified natural gas facilities, nuclear power facilities,
and computerized information and management systems. The very
existence of a complex and interdependent modern world seems to
have contributed to the advance of terrorism by offering the
terrorist a plethora of vulnerable targets. Some speakers ex-
pressed despair concerning any society's ability to defend such
targets, but it was argued in rejoinder that the analytical solu-
tion to this problem was to build sufficient redundancy into modern
systems so as to avoid vulnerable bottlenecks. For example, trans-
portation systems should seek a mix of automobile, public transit,
waterborne, and short and long-range air transport, in order to
avoid offering critical vulnerabilities, just as communications
should be diversified among ground lines, microwave, satellite,
and other technologies.

There are two aspects to new technology: new weapons and

new means whereby the terrorist can capture global attention. In addition to the traditional arsenal of time bombs, machine guns, and plastic explosives, modern technology has contributed the miniaturized letter bomb; the man-portable guided missile (such as the Soviet SA-7 heat-seeking rocket); chemical, biological, and radiological agents; and the potentiality of the use of nuclear weapons. Two SA-7's were captured in the hands of Arab terrorists at the end of a runway in Rome in 1973, and radioactive iodine was employed in a terrorist incident in Austria in 1974. One conference participant wrote, "The development and deployment of man-portable, precision-guided munitions and their likely acquisition by political extremists represents the most serious new terrorist threat. We probably will see the use of these weapons by terrorists within the next decade."

Equal to or greater in importance than new weaponry in the growth of terrorism is the global expansion of mass media of communications. Every commentator mentioned it as a fundamental permissive cause of terrorism, and much of the attention of the conference was taken up by problems of how to control the media. One conference participant wrote, "Among all the technological advances in recent years, the development of satellite communications, and in particular, their upgrading in 1968 to include a television capability have unquestionably been among the most important in making transnational activity attractive to terrorist groups." Since public attention to his cause is usually one of the terrorist's key objectives, communications advances have been critically valuable to him. Several participants noted the desirability

of preventing a terrorist group's "kidnapping" of the media--as
occurred in the SLA case in California--but it was also observed
that attempts to control the media might only lead to an escalation
in the scale of terrorist attacks. Media contribute publicity for
a particular terrorist cause, contagious triggering of other
terrorists' decisions to act, training of terrorists through a
"media-fed pool of experience and inspiration," and international
linkages among terrorist organizations.

Under the category of new toleration, we include direct and
indirect support by nations of terrorist organizations, toleration
through fear of retaliation among law-abiding nations, the frus-
tration of efforts to elicit international cooperation in carrying
out countermeasures, and the increased legitimization of "revolu-
tionary" activities. Conference participants devoted considerable
attention to so-called subversive centers for the training and
support of terrorists. By far the most important of these is the
Soviet Union and related East European regimes, but also listed
and described by various authorities are Libya, Cuba, China, North
Korea, Algeria, the Popular Democratic Republic of Yemen, Tanzania,
the Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), Zaire, Egypt, Syria,
Iraq, Lebanon, and, recently retired from the business (but appa-
rently not from state terrorism), Chile. Such centers supply
terrorists with funds, arms, training, documentation, and opera-
tional support.

In a somewhat different category is the "humanitarian" aid
supplied to the revolutionaries in Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, and
Angola by Sweden, Denmark, Holland, Norway, Finland, and the World

Council of Churches. Although not consisting of guns, this assistance has contributed to the climate of toleration of terrorist acts. In still another category are France and Switzerland, which have become involuntary hosts to all manner of foreign dissident groups because of their heritage of strong rights of political asylum and of protection of democratic freedoms. And in still a third category are those nations that are inhibited by political or commercial interests from offending governments that support or condone terrorism. They may also be concerned that if they convict and imprison terrorists, this will attract more terrorists to their territories seeking, through further violence, to free their comrades.

For all of these reasons, international efforts to stop terrorism have been weak, and this toleration of terrorism has contributed to its spread. One recent study indicates that since 1968, an international terrorist involved in a kidnapping has an eighty per cent chance of escaping death or capture, a close to even chance that all or some of his ransom demands will be granted, and the virtual certainty that he will receive world-wide publicity. For all crimes of terrorism the average sentence for the small proportion of terrorists caught and tried is less than 18 months.

In addition to the direct causes and the "three T's," one final factor that appears to be promoting the spread of transnational terrorism should be mentioned. This is the proliferation of anti-terrorist authoritarian governments. Rigid and effective authoritarian rule may be fostering transnational terrorism by closing the main target systems to dissidents and forcing them

to operate abroad. One panelist speculated that the situation today of various Latin American revolutionaries (particularly those from Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, and post-Peronist Argentina) may be somewhat parallel to that of Palestinian terrorists in the late 1960s. Being frustrated in their attempts to pressure Israel directly, the Palestinians sought to dramatize their cause by attacking more accessible societies. Similarly, Latin American revolutionaries, frozen out in their own societies, may be preparing to enter the transnational terrorist arena with attacks in North America.

CONSEQUENCES

Terrorism appears to be flourishing, despite some comments to the contrary at the conference. Several participants noted the disturbing precedent of the international recognition during 1974 of the Palestine Liberation Organization as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Beginning with recognition at the Islamic non-aligned and Rabat summit meetings and continuing at the 1974 U.N. General Assembly session, the PLO has been allowed to open offices in some 50 nations, and five U.N.-affiliated international agencies (ILO, WHO, UPU, ITU, and UNESCO) have granted it observer status. At the same time, some conference participants felt that this recognition had caused a decline in the PLO's sponsorship of terrorism; and they also suggested that the media, playing an international "linkage" role, had helped to bring about this change.

Another major consequence of terrorist activity, already mentioned in a different connection, has been the spread of

authoritarianism and a reduction in the number of democracies. Several regimes faced with terrorist campaigns have managed to overcome them but have also lost their democratic institutions in the process. The best example is probably Uruguay, which between 1968 and 1971 was ravaged by the Tupamaros. Between April and August 1972, however, President Juan-Maria Bordaberry broke the movement by proclaiming a "state of internal war" and giving the army and police complete freedom in their choice of methods. The Tupamaros are now gone, but democracy has not returned.

Few positive international steps have been taken to diminish terrorist activity, although by far the most important of these was the U.S.-Cuba memorandum of understanding concerning hijackers of aircraft and vessels that was signed in 1973. Another achievement was the virtual elimination of aircraft hijacking in the United States through the use of physical inspection of all passengers and their hand baggage. The expense of this program argues against its extension to all exposed systems, but it may become necessary to consider some comparable measures such as the X-raying of mail at vital points. The problem of using capital punishment against terrorists was debated at the conference, with strong views being expressed on both sides of the issue and no consensus emerging.

Also discussed was the policy, in force in the United States, of publicly declaring in advance that a government will not negotiate with terrorists under any circumstances versus the policy of reserving one's options and tailoring responses to particular

cases. Members of the conference who had had direct experience
in dealing with terrorists advocated the policy of no negotiations,
arguing that it prevented the spread of terrorism and worked as a
deterrent. Some participants doubted this and suggested that the
seizure of a Soviet embassy in a Western capital would be a hard
test of the policy. One commentator offered the thought that "In
some countries political terrorism may evolve into a specific bar-
gaining tactic, a mechanism of regular influence for groups which
have no other effective leverage on the centers of power," but
this view was not seconded at the conference. The dilemma of
multinational corporations faced with kidnappings of their execu-
tives was discussed, including their inability to retain personnel
if an absolute policy of no concessions is adopted. All partici-
pants seemed to support a ban on insurance against terrorist
kidnappings--for obvious reasons--and a ban on allowing tax credits
for ransom payments.

In lieu of an effective international convention against
terrorism, the experienced speakers at the conference stressed
the need for an enhanced intelligence capability against terror-
ists and the necessity of timely exchanges of intelligence infor-
mation among cooperating security forces. It was through intelli-
gence that the terrorists armed with SA-7's were apprehended at
the edge of the airport in Rome before they could destroy their
intended Israeli Airlines target. American conference partici-
pants, in particular, asserted that their need for counterterrorist
intelligence was rising at precisely a time when political circles
were making efforts to prevent or restrict their abilities to

collect such intelligence.

The main issue in the general area of consequences that divided the conference was whether or not terrorism could be suppressed. Some thought that it could not be eliminated and warned against the dangers of overreaction. They felt that domestic criminal processes were adequate to deal with the problem, and that new countermeasures were not indicated. Others vehemently disagreed and cited the costs of not dealing with terrorism or of naively believing that terrorism could not thrive in an open society with few structurally generated grievances. Commentators from Great Britain stated that with respect to Ireland, Britain had in effect been experimenting with a policy of tolerating terrorism and that the results had been disastrous. Others said that the costs of believing that "the cure could be worse than the disease" could be, on the one hand, a terrorist victory and the probable establishment of a totalitarian regime, or, on the other hand, a military-authoritarian reaction leading to the more or less permanent suspension of civil liberties.

Those who felt that terrorism could and must be suppressed candidly acknowledged that the problem is less the defeat of terrorism than the avoidance of measures that may foreclose the rights and liberties characteristic of open, pluralistic societies. It was argued that terrorism can be suppressed through "special powers," but that these inevitably entail a temporary curtailment or suspension of certain liberties. For example, censorship and detention without trial may be necessary. In order to insure that these measures do not lead to authoritarianism, it was stressed

that special powers must be voted by parliaments--on the analogy
of special powers enacted "for the duration" of a war against an
external enemy--and that elected assemblies must act in order to
retain their sovereignty. "Paradoxically, then," wrote one ana-
lyst, "the proclamation of a 'state of emergency,' martial law, or
a 'state of internal war' by the elected assembly, retaining its
own sovereignty and therefore its right to revert to normal proce-
dures, may be the only way of avoiding the military-authoritarian
takeover. Sovereign assemblies that fail to act in good time clearly
do so at their peril, if recent history is any guide."

Another theme of this discussion was the need to retaliate
against nations that train and support international terrorists as
surrogates. This point was made particularly with regard to the
Soviet Union and Cuba. It was argued that political countermeasures
were possible within the framework of the detente relationship, so
long as that relationship were more realistically understood by the
Western nations. Enhanced international intelligence on the matter
of communist support of terrorists was clearly called for.

A variety of speakers at the end of the conference indicated
that the gathering had succeeded in airing most significant points
of view and in alerting the diverse groups and agencies represented
at the conference to the special problems that the field posed.
It was recommended that further conferences might address specific
questions set in advance. Speakers also drew attention to the
need for intensive work in the future on the actual techniques
of procedure in barricade and hostage situations and on the psycho-
dynamic characteristics of terrorists.